

Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement Study

Public Information Meeting
June 16, 2022



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

Overview of Siting Study and Opportunity for Input

Objectives:

- Provide information about the low-carbon energy project siting improvement study
- Hear from the public on how to improve siting, environmental review, and permitting for low-carbon energy projects
- Hear public concerns related to clean energy projects

Please note this meeting is being recorded



Agenda

- Welcome
- Overview of the low-carbon energy project siting improvement study
- Questions and answers
- Discussion
- Opportunities for further participation
- Wrap up



Why is this important?



- By 2050, WA needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions 95% from 1990 levels AND achieve net-zero GHG emissions
- New clean energy projects are being proposed to help achieve that goal



Why the study is important

The study will help develop recommendations to the Legislature for siting, environmental review, and permitting of **industrial clean energy projects**

The recommendations will:

- Support good in-state jobs
- Contribute to the low-carbon economic development in Washington
- Reduce adverse impacts to the environment and local communities
- Preserve Tribal consultation and treaty rights



Why are we having this meeting?

We need to hear what matters to you!

Your input in this meeting will be used for developing recommendations to the state Legislature – your voice makes a difference.



Who else is involved?

- Advisory Board
 - Representatives for environmental and labor organizations, industry, ports, local governments, utilities, environmental justice entities, and Tribal government representatives
- Tribal Consultation and Engagement
 - Through Tribal information sessions, Tribal forums, and government-to-government consultation
- Interagency Policy Team
 - Representatives from 10 state agencies





Why a study is being done



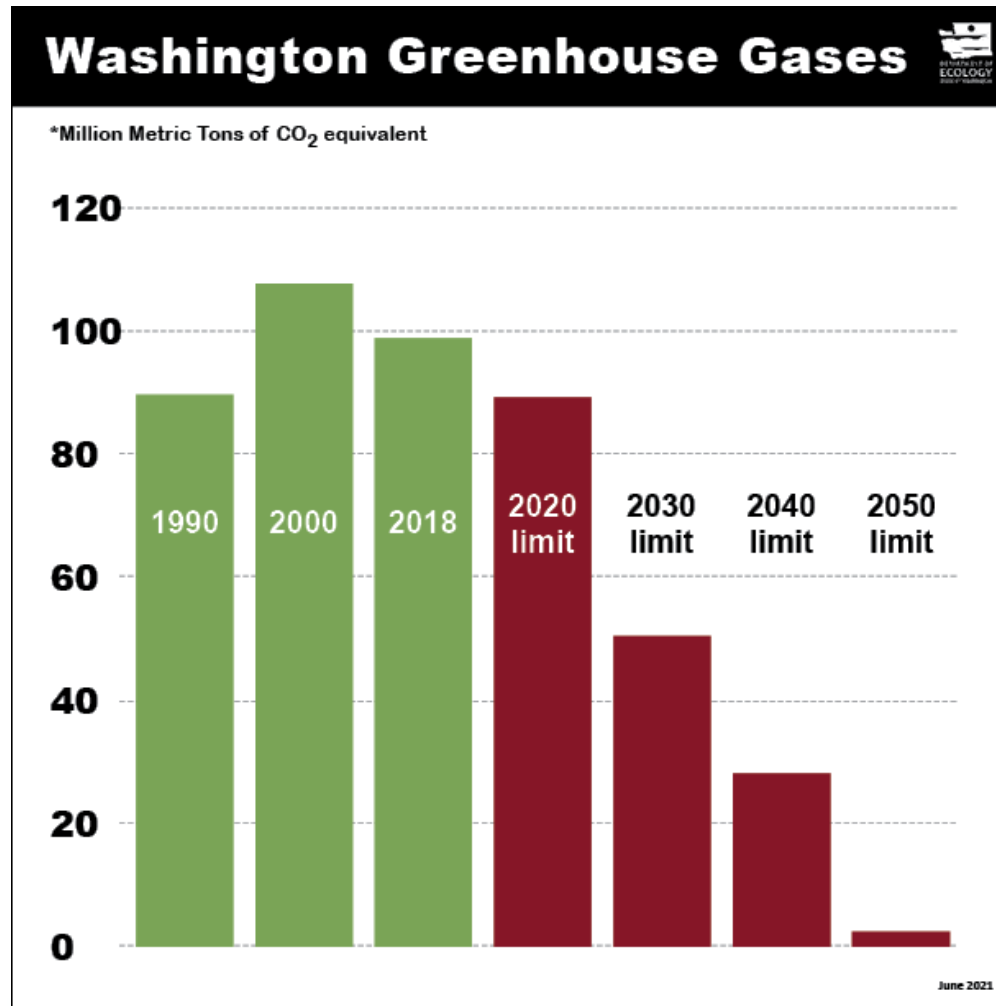
Legislative Directive

The Legislature directed Ecology and Commerce to develop recommendations for improvements to the siting and permitting of industrial projects that:

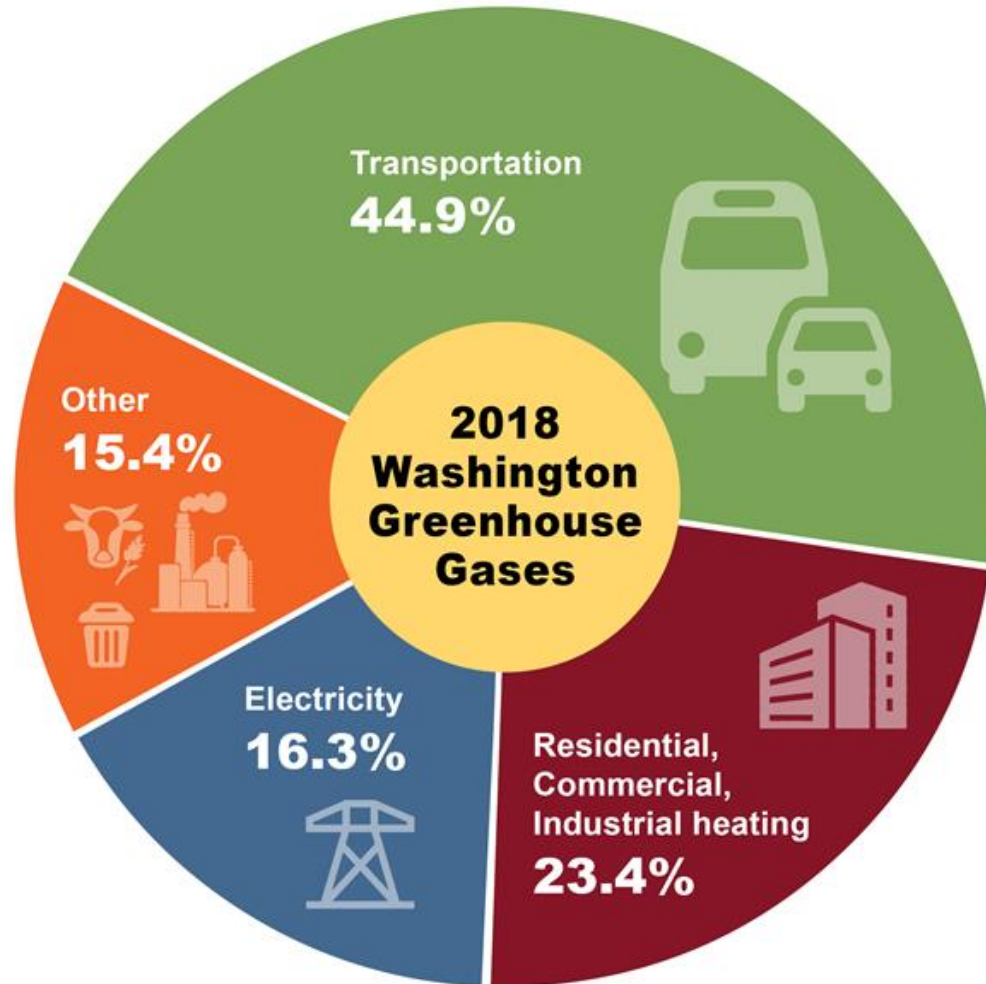
- Contribute to meeting the state's greenhouse gas limits
- Consider overburdened communities and vulnerable populations
- Preserve Tribal consultation and treaty rights
- Maintain standards for protection of the environment



Washington State – Greenhouse Gas Limits



Sources of Washington greenhouse gases



State Clean Energy Efforts

The Siting Study relates to, but is separate from these other state efforts:

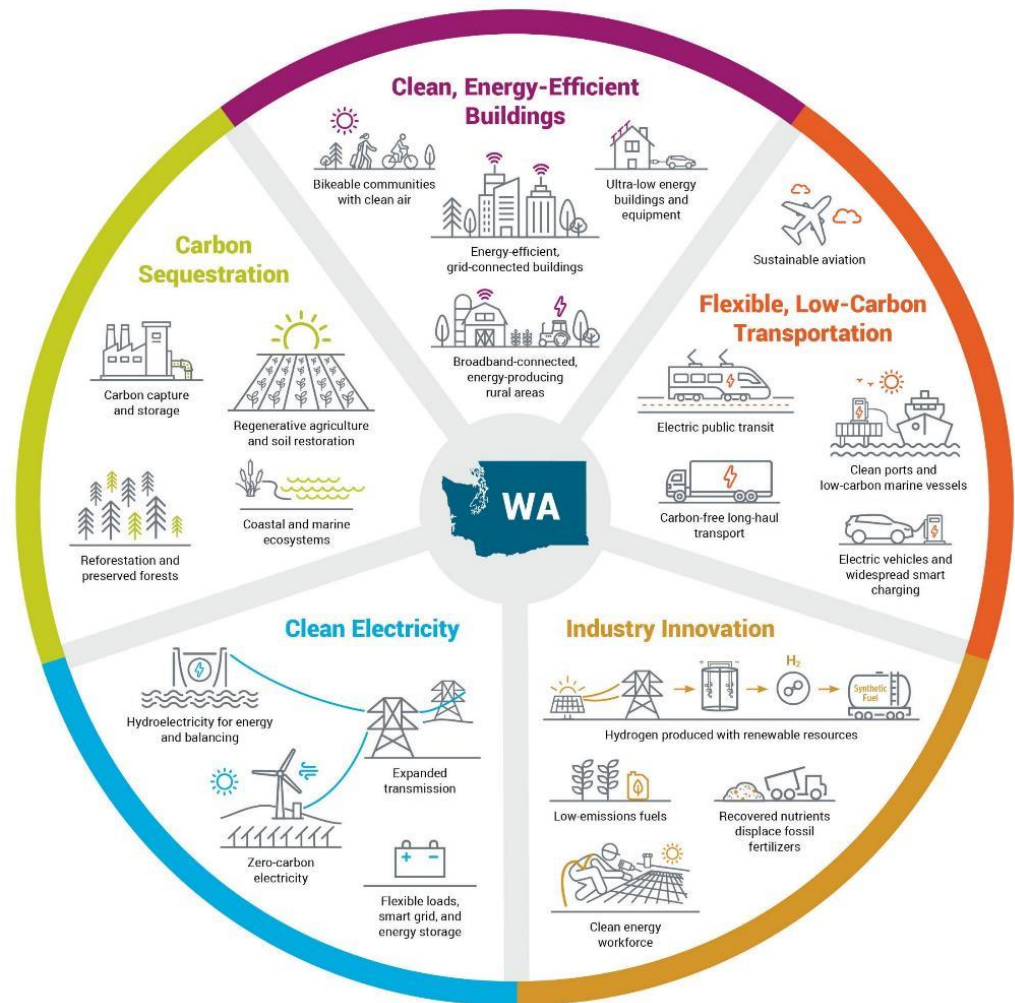
- [Climate Commitment Act](#)
- [State Energy Strategy](#)
- [Clean Energy Transformation Act](#)
- [Clean Fuel Standard](#)



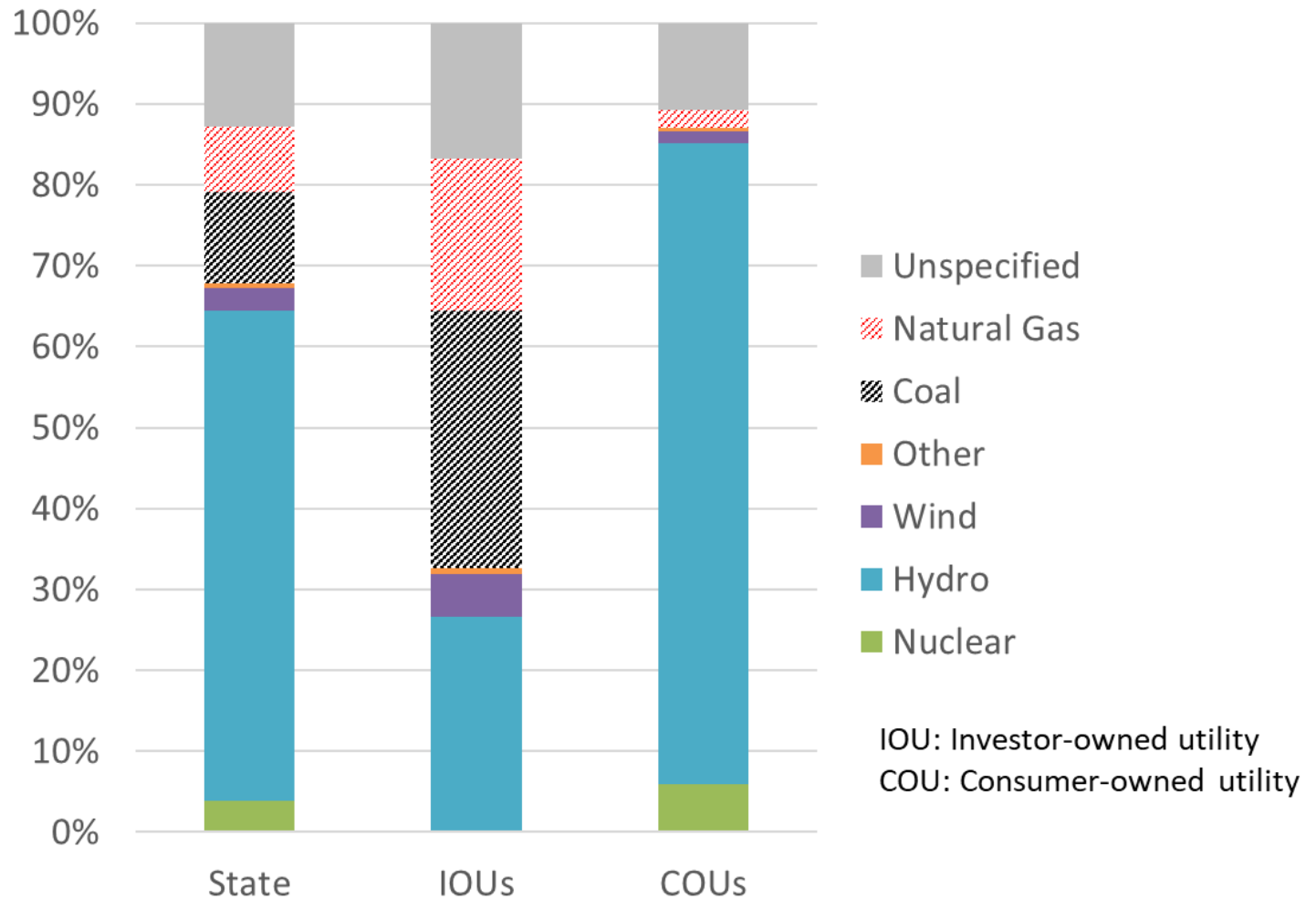
State Energy Strategy

Net-Zero Vision

A blueprint for how we can meet our state's climate goals to nearly eliminate the use of climate-threatening fossil fuels by 2050, while growing a prosperous economy and maintaining affordable and reliable energy supplies.



Washington's Current Energy Mix



Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA)

Intent: Transition to 100% clean energy

- Energy must be:
 - Clean
 - Affordable
 - Reliable
 - Equitable
- Clean Energy Standard
 - 2025: Eliminate coal from retail portfolios
 - 2030: Greenhouse gas-neutral standard
 - 2045: 100% renewable or non-emitting retail electricity supply



Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act

- [Act](#) passed by the Legislature in 2021
- Purpose:
 - Creates [Environmental Justice Council](#)
 - Ensures environmental reviews, funding decisions, and permitting decisions identify and address environmental health disparities
 - Reduces exposure to environmental hazards on Tribal lands
 - Tracks and measures implementation of environmental justice in state agencies



HEAL Definition of Environmental Justice (EJ)

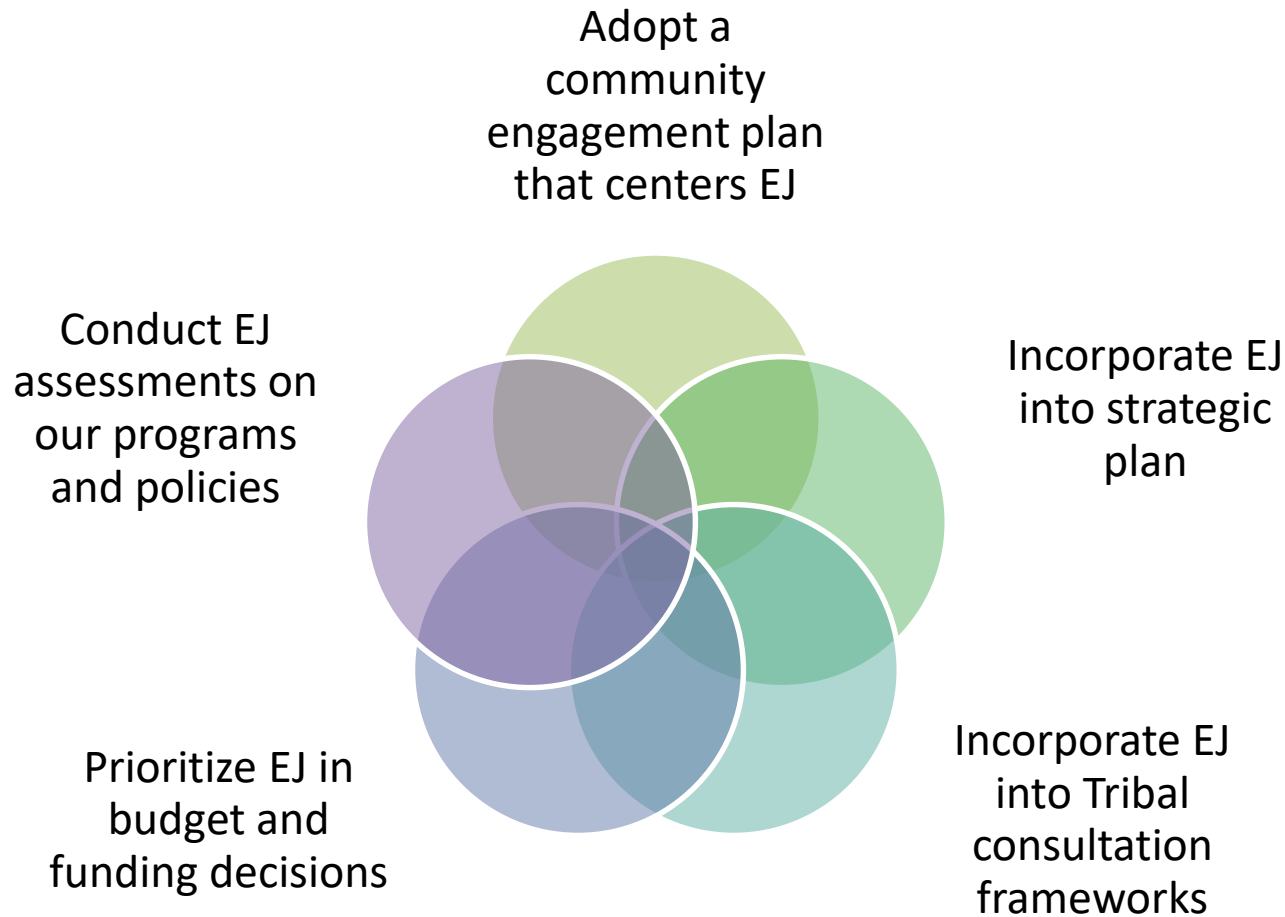
"Environmental justice" means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies.

Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.

[RCW 70A.02.010\(8\)](#)



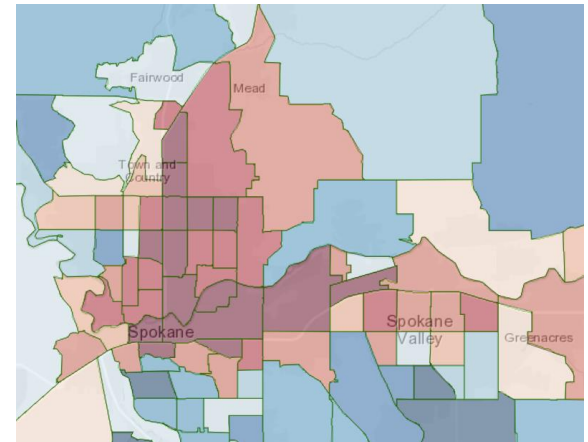
Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act Requirements for State Agencies



Washington Health Disparities Map

Provides information on a map for:

- Environmental exposures
- Environmental effects
- Socioeconomic factors
- Sensitive populations



[Department of Health Washington
Environmental Health Disparities website](#)



Treaty Tribes

- 29 Federally-Recognized Indian Tribes
- 3 Out-of-state Tribes with Treaty Reserved Rights in Washington

Additional information on the
[Governor's Office of Indian Affairs website](#)



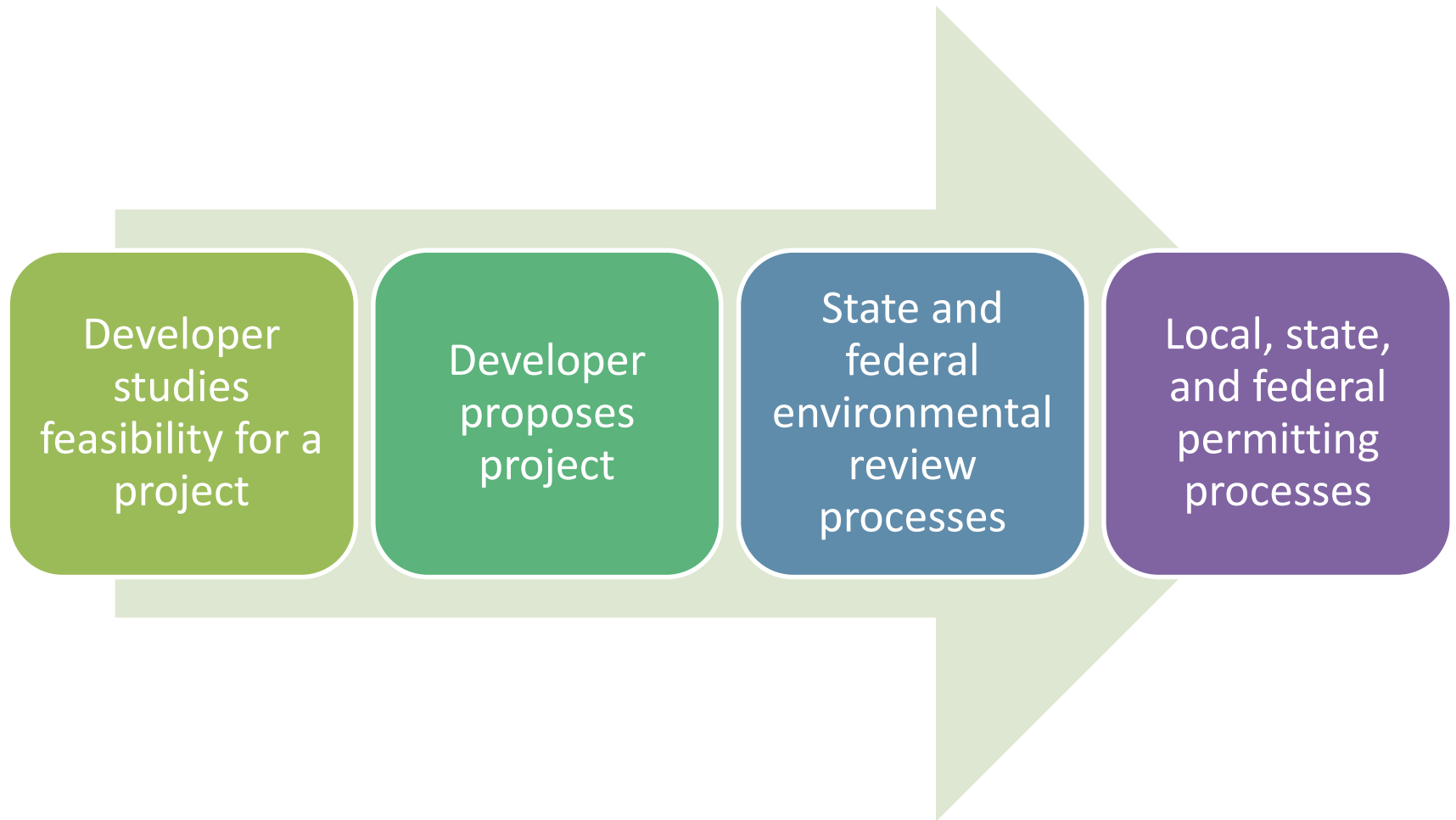


Government to Government Relationship

- 1989 State/Tribal Centennial Accord
- 2012 State/Tribal Relations Act (Chapter 122, Laws of 2012)



Proposal to Permitted Project



Agencies Involved

The agencies involved depend on the project proposal and the location

- Local governments – typically lead agency for environmental reviews, issue permits
- State agencies – may lead environmental reviews, issue permits
- Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) process - required for certain energy facilities (e.g. nuclear facilities, pipelines) with an opt-in process for clean energy facilities – coordinates all evaluation and licensing steps
- Federal agencies – federal environmental reviews, issue federal permits, lead for federal processes





SEPA IS...

State policy directing
state and local
agencies to **protect
and enhance** the
natural and built
environment by
**making informed
decisions.**

[Additional information on SEPA](#)



Project Actions



Facilities



Transmission lines

Non Project Actions



**Comprehensive
plans, zoning codes**



Planned Actions



**Land Management
Plans**



SEPA and Non-Projects

Planned Actions or Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements



Provides a “big picture” analysis



Useful opportunity to address cumulative impacts



Documents consideration of broad range of impacts and reasonable alternatives



Streamlines SEPA review for subsequent project decisions



Moving from Non-Project to Project Review

- Projects use non-project SEPA documents
- Build on completed environmental analysis
- Focus on issues not addressed during non-project review and gaps
- Projects can use identified mitigation (if done at the non-project phase)



Project Permitting

- Varies based on the project, construction, operations and location
- State, local, and federal permits from multiple agencies likely needed for complex projects
- Each permit has own regulatory requirements and timelines
- Information about permits - available from the permitting agency and the [Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation & Assistance](#)



PLANNING PHASE

**ENVIRONMENTAL
REVIEW PHASE**

**PERMITTING
PHASE**

**Developer's feasibility
study**

Comprehensive Plans

**Programmatic
Environmental Impact
Statements**

Planned Actions

**State Environmental
Policy Act (SEPA)
Review**

**National
Environmental Policy
Act (NEPA) Review**

Federal processes

State permits

Local permits

Federal permits





Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement Study



Why the study is important

The study will help develop recommendations to the Legislature for siting, environmental review, and permitting of **industrial clean energy projects**

The recommendations will:

- Support good in-state jobs
- Contribute to the low-carbon economic development in Washington
- Reduce adverse impacts to the environment and local communities
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Siting Study Approach

Partnership approach led by Department of Ecology and the Department of Commerce

Includes:

- Public input
- Input from stakeholders
- Consultation and engagement with Tribes
- Coordination with state agencies



Focus of Siting Study

- Identify systemic issues:
 - Siting of projects
 - Environmental review and permitting processes
 - Tribal treaty rights and cultural resource processes
 - Consideration of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations

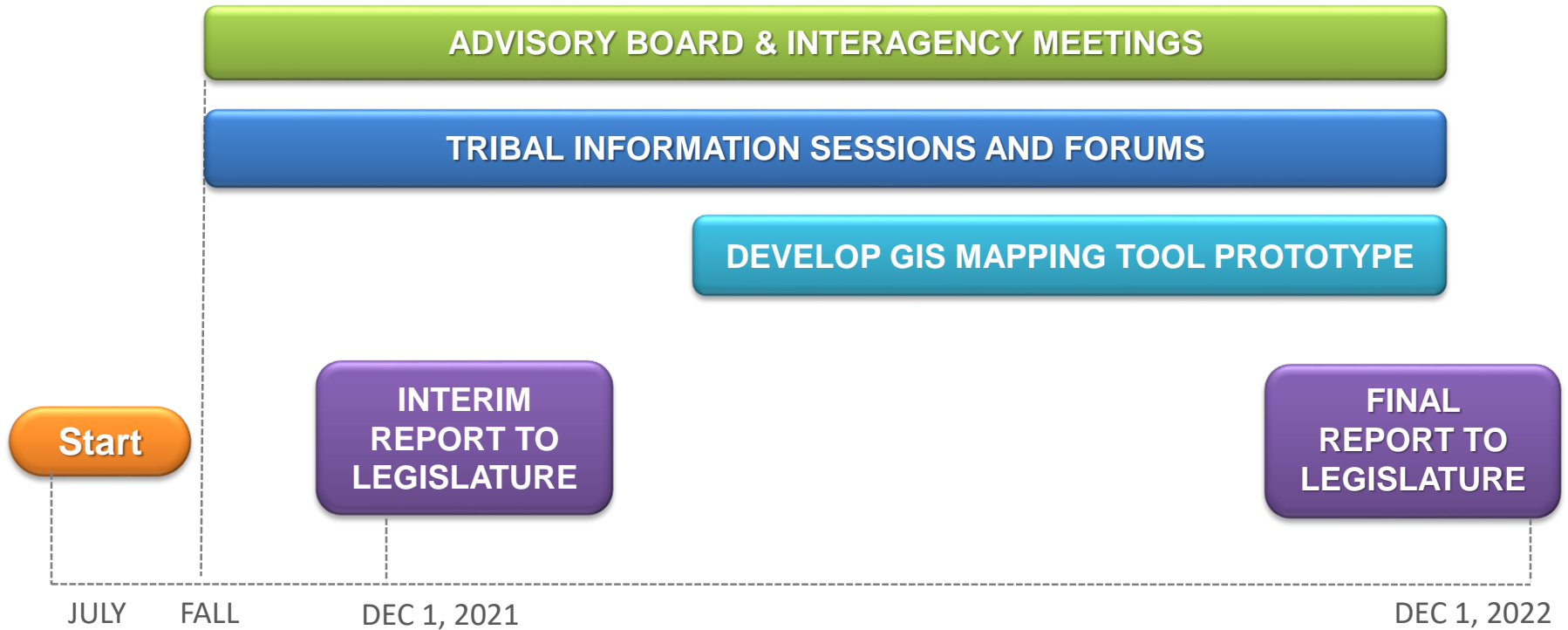


Focus – Clean Energy Projects

- Industrial clean energy facilities and projects, including (but not limited to):
 - Biorefineries and biofuel refineries
 - Electric vehicle battery manufacturers
 - Solar panel manufacturers and solar farms
 - Wind farms
 - Hydro and battery storage facilities
 - Green hydrogen facilities
 - Offshore energy facilities (wind, tidal)



Timeline



Advisory Board

- Makah Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Association of Washington Business
- Audubon Washington
- City of Spokane
- Climate Solutions
- Front and Centered
- Invenergy
- Klickitat County
- Latino Community Fund
- NextEra Energy
- Port of Benton
- Port of Grays Harbor
- Puget Sound Energy
- Renewable Energy Group
- Sierra Club
- Washington Environmental Council
- WA State Association of Counties
- WA State Building and Construction Trades Council
- WA State Labor Council
- Whatcom County



Tribal Consultation and Engagement

- Tribal information sessions
- Tribal forums
- Government-to-government consultation



Interagency Policy Team

- Ecology (co-lead)
- Commerce (co-lead)
- Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance
- Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
- Office of the Governor
- State of Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
- WA State Department of Agriculture
- WA State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
- WA State Department of Natural Resources
- WA State Department of Transportation
- WA Utilities and Transportation Commission



Low-Carbon Energy Siting Study Mapping Tool Prototype



Mapping Tool Prototype

Develop a prototype of a mapping tool

- Provide information for clean energy projects
 - Who to contact
 - Issues to consider
- Use available data
- Potential to add information in the future



Other Energy Mapping Work

- [Compatible Energy Siting Assessment for wind and solar](#) (Department of Commerce)
- DNR Land Solar Energy Mapping (Department of Natural Resources)
- Least-conflict solar siting work for the Columbia Basin (Washington State University)





Legislative reports



LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

- Interim Report – submitted
- Final Report (due Dec 1, 2022)
 - Includes recommendations
 - Identifies additional studies





Topics and what we've heard



Topics and What We've Heard

- Community engagement
- Environmental justice and equity considerations
- Improving Tribal consultation and engagement
- Local government roles



Topics and What We've Heard

- Environmental impacts and mitigation
- Advanced planning
- Integrated approach



Topics and What We've Heard

- Pre-application assistance and information
- Financial benefits and impacts
- Staff and funding support



Topics and What We've Heard

- Mapping tools
- State agency guidance
- Coordination with other energy work in Washington
- Additional studies needed





Making your voice heard



More opportunities to participate

- Next public meetings:
 - August, TBD
- [Submit a comment](#) at any time
- [Advisory Board meetings](#): monthly meetings with time for public comment
- [Website](#): view meeting materials and recordings



For more information:

- Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement Study [website](#)
- Sign up for [email list](#)





Thank you for
participating!

